

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE

June 4, 2013

It has come to my attention that the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is proposing to adopt an air quality regulation that will prohibit fire rings on the beach. Although I have been informed the SCAQMD's original June 7 hearing date has been postponed, nonetheless, the SCAQMD could rule on this in the near future, and I do not want Los Angeles County to lose the opportunity to participate in the debate and play a role in determining its future related to beach fire rings.

Since the beach party days of Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon, beach campfires have been a low cost time-honored tradition and recreational pastime in the Los Angeles County area – indeed, all of Southern California – and appeal to the wide and diverse population that Los Angeles County serves. In fact, when the County took over operation of Dockweiler State Beach in 1975, the fire rings were already there and to this day remain. At a quick glance, parking revenue alone shows that our residents and visitors are willing to pay for something they appreciate – recreating at the beach in the evening hours surrounding a fire ring! Parking revenue earned after 4:00 p.m. at Dockweiler State Beach amounts to as much as 43% of that beach's parking lot proceeds annually, and approaches \$570,000 in absolute dollars. Again, this is after the typical beach-going activity is over for the day.

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I understand the science the AQMD is relying upon in support of its prohibition has not been widely dispersed or understood, nor have the health risks and hazards specifically associated with beach fire rings. Also confounding is that campfires around the State's park campgrounds are apparently specifically exempted from the proposed prohibition. What's good for State parks, it seems to me, ought to be good for State beaches or any others. Moreover, anyone who does not wish to be exposed to the health impacts associated with beach fires can merely go to another beach operated by our fine Department of Beaches and Harbors or other jurisdictions in the region. Let's not be hasty in legislating away something that can be voluntarily avoided, especially in light of the fact that so many individuals and families embrace the tradition of beach campfires in L.A. County. When it comes to polluters, picking on beach fire rings for emitting smoke-related particulates is picking on the little guy. Indeed, at Dockweiler State Beach alone, beachgoers are exposed to emissions from airplanes taking off from LAX and flying overhead, automobiles driving on Vista del Mar atop the Dockweiler bluffs, Los Angeles City's Hyperion wastewater/sewage treatment plant immediately across the street, and both the Chevron oil refinery and Los Angeles City's Scattergood power plant further south along the road.

Having said this, I am, nonetheless, aware of areas of Orange County where residents are particularly impacted due to the proximity of fire rings to their homes. And, I know of certain local governments that have determined to regulate more carefully the use of beach fire rings in their jurisdictions. Accordingly, I believe an appropriate compromise is to allow local jurisdictions to regulate or prohibit beach fire rings as they see fit. This is the approach Newport Beach, which initiated the discussion in the first place, has adopted and one which I believe we, too, should endorse. Whereas Newport Beach is most likely to prohibit or heavily regulate its fire rings, I would hazard a guess that Los Angeles County will choose to keep our beach fires kindled!

I, THEREFORE, HEREBY MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS oppose any action on the part of the South Coast Air Quality Management District to prohibit any and all fire rings on beaches in Los Angeles County and instead allow local jurisdictions to determine for themselves what is right for their areas and for their constituents.

FURTHER, I MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS direct the Chief Executive Officer to send a letter to the South Coast Air Quality Management District on behalf of the Board advising the District of its support for beach fire rings and local control.

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